

THE MENTAL HYGIENE MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA.

Physicians in California should be conversant with the excellent activities of the California Society for Mental Hygiene, a state branch of a national organization which is giving effective and sadly needed service. The mental hygiene movement is well described as a well-organized endeavor to reduce the alarming amount of mental impairment in the United States by making public careful statements of the causes of mental disease, by securing earlier medical treatment, and by preventive social service with individuals threatened with mental breakdown. The movement also includes a survey of institutions caring for the insane for the purpose of determining the best means for improving standards of care among the 200,000 and more sufferers from mental disease in the United States. The prevention and proper care of mental deficiencies is an important feature of the program.

The California Society is working through various committees covering the following activities: 1. Committee on public meetings. 2. On mental hygiene in national defense. This committee has the important function of trying to segregate feeble-minded girls who would be a menace if allowed at large in the neighborhood of military camps. It is also concerned with the psychological examination of recruits and the selection of men for duties requiring special psychological qualifications as for example, the aviation service. It is concerned with the psychological problems of shock, re-education, vocational training, recreation in the Army and Navy, and the problems arising from emotional instability, fear and self-control. 3. On the commitment of the insane. This committee seeks to secure proper recognition of the fact that the insane are sick and should be treated as sick and not as criminals. 4. On the establishment of a State psychopathic hospital for the care and preventive treatment of acute and curable insanities. 5. On the study and vocational placement of sub-normal and super-normal children, with mental tests to determine their status. 6. On the psychological examination, care and treatment of delinquents. 7. On the establishment of county branches of the State Society for Mental Hygiene. 8. On the after-care of the insane. 9. On mental hygiene clinics. 10. On publicity. 11. (Proposed). On the care and treatment of drug addiction.

Let each physician read over this list and see for himself just what function of needed service such an organized program would provide in his own district. It is applicable as much in rural sections as in the cities and towns. The problems are different but the needs are equally great. There should be a branch of this State society in every county in the State, and physicians should be the first to recognize the prime importance of having a well-organized mental hygiene society in their own district.

Physicians should recognize this for several reasons. Among these reasons may be mentioned the effective service that the mental hygiene movement is rendering in driving out the narrow cults and sects of healing so-called, which thrive on ignor-

ance and improper mental training. This is worthy of contemplation. This is, too, aside from the direct results of social, moral and physical improvement which follow such activities as here outlined. The physician in war-time, vastly more even than in peace-time, must have his public conscience sensitive and feel his inherent obligation to serve the community in a public and constructive capacity as well as simply in efficient private medical service.

MEASLES EPIDEMIC.

Never before in the history of the state, according to Dr. W. H. Kellogg, Secretary of the California State Board of Health, have measles and German measles been so prevalent. During 1917 there were 23,500 cases of these diseases reported to the State Board of Health, and during January and February of this year no less than 9,000 cases of these diseases have been reported. While nearly all cases have been of a very mild type, occasionally the disease has appeared in a very severe form.

Since most fatal cases of measles occur in children under five years of age, parents should take special care in protecting very young children from becoming infected. The best way to control measles is to isolate all cases as soon as suspicious symptoms occur. The chief difficulty in the control of the disease lies in the fact that it is more "catching" in the early stages, before any rash appears. Prompt isolation, however, helps to reduce the prevalence of the disease.

The State Board of Health does not advise closing the schools during an epidemic of measles, provided a system of inspection of school children is maintained. The best results are obtained through keeping the schools open and excluding all pupils who show any early symptoms of illness, such as fever, sore throat, or the symptoms of a common cold.

The regulations of the Board require the isolation of all cases of measles and German measles. Health officers and citizens should comply with these regulations in order that the wide prevalence of these diseases may be reduced. The presence of measles among our soldiers will not help to win the war.

DEAD BABY OR DEAD GUINEA PIG.¹

Within the last few weeks there has been a fresh outbreak of denunciation from a few anti-vivisectionists, on account of statements made at a Commonwealth Club luncheon by Dr. T. W. Huntington, a member of the American Red Cross Commission to Italy and president of the American Surgical Association. It isn't so long since some American contributors to the Red Cross sought to enjoin the society from making use of some of its funds for research by vivisection. It is charitable to assume that some of the objectors don't know what they are doing; and one reason they don't know is that medical men are too prone to treat the objections and denunciations of anti-vivisectionists with silence, so that a large

¹ From the San Francisco Star.